

REPORT

To: JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES		Subject: CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT AND PERSONNEL ISSUES - PROGRESS REPORT
From: HEAD OF PERSONNEL SERVICES		
Date: 21 June 1996	Ref: AB/IO	

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report summaries the progress to date in respect of (a) Conditions of Employment, and (b) other personnel issues of interest to employees, their representatives and the Joint Consultative Committees.

(a) CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

The Committee are aware of the differing conditions of employment adopted by the former constituent authorities and the importance of securing agreement of conditions relevant to North Lanarkshire Council. Such progress is influenced by TUPE and transfer rights but notwithstanding this factor, agreement has been reached in a number of core conditions, particularly for APT & C employees. Such agreement and remaining unresolved points on core conditions were reported to the Council's Personnel Services Committee on 25 April 1996. These areas of agreement so intimated are adopted by the Council and appended for information. Further liaison with the trade unions will address certain of the remaining outstanding issues which represented "core conditions" together with consideration of procedures for the Council in regard to grievance, discipline, flexible working hours and absence management.

To assist progress in identifying and addressing elements of employee conditions, particularly in circumstances where budget decision of the Council and work practices impact on service provision, two working groups have been established, comprising senior officials from the Council's services. These two officer groups will complement the ongoing consultative work with the trade unions on employment conditions with the objective of formulating proposals which jointly can be brought to the Council.

With regard to manual and craft employees, preliminary discussions have been held on employment conditions. It is perhaps worth noting that the Staff Commission work and advice on transfers and matching, have focused on APT & C staff, and largely on the premise that manual/craft employees would transfer on reorganisation with pay and conditions unaltered. While this has in fact been the case, the variations in employment conditions inherited from the former constituent authorities, require significant work and patience - in rationalising these at levels acceptable to trade unions and managers. Further, the pressures brought by compulsory competitive tendering and the operational demands of DSO and DLO services, bring pay and employment conditions into focus as sensitive but critical items which must continue to be addressed.

The consultative machinery now established will facilitate such work as will the proposals now being formulated for local consultative arrangements where the latter will assist in addressing specific circumstances of respective departments and services.

(b) **PROGRESS ON OTHER PERSONNEL ISSUES**

The formulation of various personnel, health and safety and training policies complement the work associated with employment conditions and consultative papers will be submitted in due course. For the information of the Joint Consultative Committees, a summary of other employee/personnel matters is given below:-

(i) **Staff Commission**

The series of periodic visits by the Commissioners to consult the Council on matching and transfers is now almost complete. The Commission have noted the achievements of the Council in its transfer and matching programmes. The disengagement of the Staff Commission appears imminent and the Council have recommended, in response to recent Commission consultation, that the recruitment restrictions set by the Commission be lifted from July 1996.

(ii) **Vacancy Monitoring**

The Council have established a Sub Committee to scrutinise vacancies as part of its measures to deal with essential financial constraints and this process will continue throughout the rest of the year.

(iii) **Employee Communications**

The Staff Newsletter has proved an important part of the overall communication process with the Council's employees and the trade unions may wish to offer comments on the newsletter in this regard.

(iv) **Health and Safety**

The Council have adopted the overall health and safety policy essential to the safeguarding of employees and to the Council and further policies, programmes and procedures are being formulated to cater for a variety of health and safety matters.

It may be the view of the Joint Consultative Committees that health and safety be a regular or standing item on the agenda to recognise the importance given to the subject and to allow periodic progress reports to be submitted. The Committees' views on this would be welcomed.

The above represents several of the ongoing personnel and employee issues and the Consultative Committees are invited to note and where appropriate, comment.



Head of Personnel Services